United Nations

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

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FOREWORD

The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) was created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966. On 1 January 1978, the statute of the Unit, as adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, took effect. By this action, the Unit became a subsidiary organ of the legislative bodies of the organizations within the United Nations system which have accepted the said statute. These organizations, hereinafter referred to as the participating organizations, are listed in chapter II of the present report. The main purpose of the Unit is to enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system.

According to its statute, the Unit shall, inter alia, satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the participating organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of resources available for carrying out their activities. The Unit is composed of 11 Inspectors having experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions, and are appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. They serve in their personal capacity for a term of five years, renewable once.

Inspectors have the broadest powers of investigation in all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of services and proper use of resources and may make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. They are also mandated to inspect and evaluate the activities of the participating organizations and make recommendations aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination among these organizations.

At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly, in the preamble of resolution 48/221, reaffirmed the statute of the Unit, as the only independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body.

The Unit prepares reports, notes and confidential letters addressed to one or more organizations and/or of interest to the United Nations system as a whole. In addition, the Unit submits an annual report, covering its main activities during the year, to the General Assembly and to the legislative organs of the participating organizations.

The present report is the twenty-sixth of its kind prepared by the Unit since its establishment.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report gives an account of the activities carried out by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) during the period from 1 July 1993 to 30 June 1994 and covers the following main issues: (a) the Unit's work programme for 1994 and its preliminary work programme for 1995 and beyond; (b) measures to enhance the Unit's performance, productivity and impact (implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/221 of 23 December 1993 and the views of JIU on decision 47/454, paragraph (b), of 23 December 1992; (c) relations and cooperation with the participating organizations and other bodies within the United Nations system; and (d) follow-up of reports.

2. In respect of its work programme (A/49/11, annex), the Unit has concentrated its inspection, investigation and evaluation work on the following four interrelated priority areas: (a) management, budgetary and administrative issues; (b) operational activities for development; (c) peace-keeping operations; and (d) humanitarian assistance.

3. These priority areas constitute the Unit's response to changing international realities and the consequential priorities and concerns of Member States and the secretariats of the participating organizations. The Inspectors are determined to keep pace with new challenges and are accordingly concerned with the need to make their work more relevant and reflecting those priorities and concerns.

4. Chapter V of the present report describes the Unit's work programme for the current calendar year, its coverage and measures for its further improvement. This chapter also gives an indication of JIU's tentative work programme for 1995 and beyond.

5. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/221, considered and took note with appreciation of the report of JIU on its activities during the period 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993, 1/ of its work programme for 1993 (A/48/129), and of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit (A/48/383).

6. By the same resolution, the General Assembly addressed two specific requests to JIU. The Unit, inter alia, was requested to study and to report to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session on means by which the Unit could enhance its inspection and evaluation of specific fields of activities (para. 13). While noting with appreciation the efforts of JIU aimed at improving its programming methods, output and quality of work, the Assembly requested the Unit to continue its efforts to comply with the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and to report thereon to the Assembly (para. 3).

7. It may also be recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph (b) of its decision 47/454, requested the views of JIU and three other oversight bodies on measures for improving the effectiveness and possible strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms.

8. Chapter VI, entitled "Measures to enhance the performance, productivity and impact of JIU", contains the Unit's comprehensive comments on the issues addressed in the above resolution and decision of the General Assembly; it also gives an account of measures undertaken or contemplated to implement the above-mentioned requests from the legislative organs.

9. The Unit's relations and cooperation with the participating organizations, external and internal oversight bodies and other relevant bodies within the United Nations system are described in chapter VII of the report.

10. Chapters VIII and IX of the present report deal with the summaries of JIU reports and follow-up of its reports, respectively.

II. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

11. The following are the organizations that have accepted the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit:

United Nations and its affiliated bodies;

International Labour Organization (ILO);

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);

World Health Organization (WHO);

Universal Postal Union (UPU);

International Telecommunication Union (ITU);

World Meteorological Organization (WMO);

International Maritime Organization (IMO);

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO);

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

III. COMPOSITION OF THE UNIT

12. The composition of the Unit as at 30 June 1994 was as follows:

Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski (Poland),** Chairman

Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria),*** Vice-Chairman

Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes (Greece)**

Mr. Richard V. Hennes (United States of America)**

Mr. Homero L. Hernández-Sanchez (Dominican Republic)***

Mr. Tunsala Kabongo (Zaire)**

Mr. Boris P. Krasulin (Russian Federation)***

Mr. Kahono Martohadinegoro (Indonesia)*

Mr. Francesco Mezzalama (Italy)***

Mr. Khalil I. Othman (Jordan)***

Mr. Raúl Quijano (Argentina)****

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* Term of office expires on 31 December 1994.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 1995.

*** Term of office expires on 31 December 1997.

**** Term of office expires on 31 December 1998.

13. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, the Unit elected Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski as Chairman and Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 1994. During the year 1993, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes and Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski were, respectively, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Unit.

14. The General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, in conformity with articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Unit's statute, appointed Mr. Sumihiro Kuyama (Japan) to replace Mr. Kahono Martohadinegoro, whose term of office expires on 31 December 1994. Mr. Kuyama will serve for a period of five years beginning on 1 January 1995.

15. Since the terms of office of Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, Mr. Richard V. Hennes and Mr. Tunsala Kabongo will expire on 31 December 1995, as stated in paragraph 12 above, it will be necessary for the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, in conformity with the same articles 2, 3 and 4 of the statute, to appoint four persons to fill the resulting vacancies (for details, see A/49/110 and Corr.1).

16. The Inspectors would like to reiterate their belief that the General Assembly should continue to pay special attention to the selection and appointment of Inspectors, in accordance with the requisite qualifications stipulated under article 2, paragraph 1, of the Unit's statute.

IV. SECRETARIAT

17. The Unit is assisted by its secretariat, which consists of an Executive Secretary at the D-2 level, 7 research officers (3 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 P-3 and 1 P-2), 2 research assistants at level G-7 and 8 General Service staff. This personnel strength has remained the same almost since the Unit's inception. In resolution 48/221, the General Assembly, while expressing its appreciation for improvements made, recognized "the need to give adequate means to the Joint Inspection Unit in order to enable it to carry out its functions".

18. Current staff resources are inadequate. This situation, coupled with an insufficient budget for other objects of expenditure, constitutes a serious constraint on the Unit's determined efforts to enhance further its productivity and performance. The staffing of the Unit's secretariat has also suffered rom delays in recruitment for vacant posts and replacement of some staff over extended periods, notably to peace-keeping missions. It is hoped that the United Nations Secretariat, to which the staff of the Unit belong, will be more forthcoming in filling vacancies and replacing staff.

19. With regard to access to modern information technology and computerization of the Unit, a local area network with a current capacity of 13 workstations has been installed. When fully operational, this network will provide a link to data and units outside the Unit. The emphasis during the years ahead will be on establishing and developing a technical support structure and the skills of the support staff required for the effective use of information technology.

20. Despite the progress indicated above in accessing modern information technology, the Unit is overall still well behind other parts of the United Nations sys'em. In spite of promoting optical disc technology, JIU has only limited and insufficient access to the United Nations documents retrieval system, or that of the other participating organizations. With the exception of one private personal computer, the Inspectors do not have work stations, nor do all research staff.

V. WORK PROGRAMME

21. The Unit has established its work programme for 1994 and preliminary work programme for 1995 and beyond (A/49/111, annex).

22. The programme was prepared in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, which requires that the Unit, when preparing its work programme, take into account, besides its own observations, experience and assessment of priorities as regards subjects for inspection, any requests of the competent organs of the organizations and suggestions received from the executive heads of the organizations and the bodies of the United Nations system concerned with budgetary control, investigation, coordination and evaluation. Further, the Unit was also guided by relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and of the legislative organs of other participating organizations.

23. As called for in article 9, paragraph 2, of the statute of JIU, the work programme was submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, subsequently, issued by him (A/49/111) under the agenda item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations" rather than under a separate agenda item ("Joint Inspection Unit"). This is because of the biennialization of certain agenda items of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, including that of JIU, in accordance with resolution 46/220 of 20 December 1991.

A. Analysis of the work programme for 1994

24. As indicated in paragraph 32 of its annual report for 1993, 1/ in the current reporting period the Unit has continued to focus its evaluation, inspection and investigation work on four major interrelated priority areas, namely: management, budgetary and administrative issues; operational activities for development; peace-keeping operations; and humanitarian assistance.

25. It may be noted that while activities covered under the first two priority areas have, over the years, been regular and well-established fields of the Unit's work, those under peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance are relatively new ones, being the Unit's response to changing priorities and focus in international organizations. Coverage of the four priority areas indicated above established last year seems to meet with a favourable reaction from Member States, as evidenced in paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 48/221, which lists all of them.

26. The work programme constitutes the Unit's response to and implementation of a number of requests and recommendations addressed to it during the past few years, in particular those contained in resolutions 47/201 of 22 December 1992 and 48/221 of 23 December 1993. Preparation of the work programme was guided by the following four considerations:

(a) Focus of the work programme;

(b) Types of reports;

(c) Productivity of the Unit;

(d) Balance between system-wide reports and those addressed for action to one or several participating organizations.

(a) Focus of the work programme

27. As already indicated in paragraph 3, the Inspectors, being conscious of changing priorities in organizations of the United Nations system, were determined to make every effort to focus the Unit's work programme on major concerns of Member States and the secretariats of the participating organizations.

28. In the process of preparing the work programme, they took special care to identify those concerns by thoroughly analysing the discussions, resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and of the legislative organs of other participating organizations. JIU was also guided by recommendations, discussions and reports of a number of intergovernmental and expert bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), ACABQ, the Board of Auditors and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The Unit was determined to accommodate in its work programme as many of the requests and suggestions submitted by participating organizations as possible.

29. As a result of this approach, most of the 17 studies included in JIU's current work programme were proposals received from the secretariats of the participating organizations and/or derived from resolutions, decisions and substantive discussions of the legislative bodies of these organizations.

30. The Inspectors noted with particular satisfaction specific requests for studies and reports addressed to the Unit by the legislative organs of the United Nations and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The Inspectors believe that legislative organs of participating organizations should avail themselves more often of the opportunity to focus and target the work of JIU. The Unit would welcome this.

31. Targeting of the Unit by other external oversight bodies could be useful and lead to further improvements in focusing JIU's work programme. JIU has been advocating this approach since 1991. 2/

32. The Inspectors will continue to give attention to the necessity of focusing and concentrating on major concerns of the participating organizations when formulating the Unit's work programme, which can be amended as and when the need arises.

(b) Types of reports

33. The Unit's work programme for 1994 and preliminary work programme for 1995 and beyond reflect the Inspectors' determination to implement the expressed wish of Member States - as reflected, inter alia, in paragraphs 3 and 13 of General Assembly resolution 48/221 - to orient JIU reports towards inspection, investigation and evaluation.

34. To help with this reorientation, the Unit is preparing an internal study on procedures and rules of inspection, investigation and evaluation (see paras. 70-72 below). This project would update and codify JIU's existing practice, and allow the Unit to learn from past experience, as well as from other similar international and national institutions.

35. In resolution 47/201, the General Assembly invited JIU, in drawing up its work programme, to make proposals reflecting the recommendations contained in ACABQ's report (A/47/755). Among other things, paragraph 13 of that report states that: "the Advisory Committee believes that since the research function does not necessarily enhance the capacity of the Unit to discharge its statutory obligations, it should be discontinued in favour of more inspection and evaluation as called for in the statute".

36. While agreeing completely with the view that the Unit discharges its functions most appropriately through inspection, investigation and evaluation, and in fact has been pursuing this approach vigorously in recent years, JIU would like to make the following observations in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

37. Research, understood as "careful search or inquiry, course of critical investigation", "a systematic search for facts", 3/ is and should continue to be a basic and generic activity at the same fundamental level as analysis and writing. The Unit should apply research methodology and concepts in all its work, whether inspection, investigation or evaluation. Any presentation of findings in a report, under any of these three categories, should be based on good, sound research. Formulation of specific, action-oriented, well-documented recommendations can only be done on the basis of high quality analysis and research.

38. Thus, as regards ACABQ's comment, it should be understood that the Unit's reports should not be merely descriptive, theoretical and academic but rather analytical, practical and prescriptive, based on the appropriate standard of research needed for quality reports. This is not the inherent fault of the concept of research, but rather because in the not too distant past some of the topics of JIU reports were not focused or relevant enough to be of use to the work of organizations of the United Nations system. More quality control is also needed to ensure that research is of a high and consistent quality.

(c) Productivity of the Unit

39. The work programme for the current calendar year see (A/49/111) lists 17 reports; this constitutes a sharp increase from the 12 contained in the 1993 work programme.

40. Increasing the Unit's productivity is an ongoing concern of the Inspectors. In resolution 48/221, third preambular paragraph and paragraph 3, the General Assembly expressed its appreciation for the measures already taken aimed at increasing JIU's productivity.

41. The Inspectors intend to keep the matter of productivity under constant review. It is expected that computerization of the Unit and access to modern information technology will allow a further increase in its productivity. However, this does not mean that the Inspectors will lose sight of ensuring high quality reports.

(d) Balance between system-wide reports and those addressed for action to one or several participating organizations

42. As in the past, great care has been given in the period under review to the need for balance in the work programme between reports addressed to all organizations of the United Nations system and those of concern to one or several of them. JIU, being "the only independent system-wide inspection,

evaluation and investigation body" (resolution 48/221, sixth preambular paragraph), endeavours to give preference to system-wide reports. This is why 11 of the 17 reports in the current work programme are system-wide in scope.

B. Preliminary work programme for 1995 and beyond

43. In respect of areas for future studies, the Inspectors have maintained the same four areas (see para. 24 above) for their inspection, evaluation and investigation reports and activities during 1995 and beyond. The following 13 subjects are retained under the four main areas, which might be further elaborated, refined and expanded:

1. Management, budgetary and administrative issues

(a) A system-wide comparative review of methods of geographical distribution calculation (proposed by UNESCO);

(b) Inspection of the Economic Commission for Europe (generated internally);

(c) Inspection of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (generated internally);

(d) Number, size and cost of conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings and gatherings in the technical cooperation programmes of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system (proposed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP));

(e) Impact of UNDP's new support cost arrangements (proposed by FAO and the United Nations);

2. Operational activities for development

(a) Contributions of the United Nations system to the economic, social and political advancement of women: an assessment of progress and prospects (generated internally);

(b) United Nations system development cooperation in science and technology: Part III - Latin America and the Caribbean (proposed by FAO);

(c) Relationship between funding agencies of the United Nations system (especially the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) and the United Nations Secretariat, particularly the regional commissions (generated internally);

3. Peace-keeping operations

(a) Problems of the start-up phase of peace-keeping operations (requested by the General Assembly in resolution 48/221, para. 2);

(b) Staffing of military component of peace-keeping operations, including, inter alia, rotation of troop contingents (generated internally);

(c) Methodology for establishment and presentation of peace-keeping budgets (generated internally);

(d) Peace-keeping operations: budgeting, procurement and management of vehicles (generated internally);

4. Humanitarian assistance

Investigation of the relationship between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations (proposed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)).

VI. MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPACT OF JIU

44. This chapter is a recapitulation of the action taken to implement a number of recommendations which have been addressed to the Unit, in particular those contained in resolution 48/221. Also presented are the related views of JIU on measures for improving the effectiveness as well as possible strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms, as requested in General Assembly decision 47/454, paragraph (b), of 23 December 1992, and reaffirmed also in Assembly decision 48/493 A of 29 July 1994.

A. Implementation of resolution 48/221 on JIU

45. The Unit welcomes the opportunity to report to the General Assembly on a number of specific points contained in resolution 48/221. It gives the Unit a good opportunity to inform Member States of the efforts it has already undertaken or is contemplating, aimed at improving its performance, productivity and impact. That resolution encourages JIU to continue its efforts with vigour and determination.

46. The Secretary-General and the Unit were requested, in paragraph 13 of the resolution, to study and report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on means by which the Unit could enhance its inspection and evaluation of specific fields of activities, such as peace-keeping operations, humanitarian assistance, operational activities for development and technical and financial matters. In paragraph 4 the Assembly invited the Unit, when preparing its future work programmes, to put more emphasis on inspection and evaluation to ensure optimum use of funds in order to enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system.

47. As indicated earlier, the General Assembly - while noting with appreciation, in paragraph 3 of the resolution, the efforts of JIU aimed at improving its programming methods, output and quality of work - requested the Unit to continue its efforts to comply with the recommendations contained in the report of ACABQ and to report thereon to the Assembly.

48. The need to improve its performance has, over recent years, been a major concern for the Unit. Towards this end, it has taken a number of measures such as a more comprehensive programme of work including new orientations, expanded and more effective dialogue and consultations with Member States and the participating organizations, and implementation of a series of internal improvement measures.

49. But efforts by JIU alone, however worthy, would not be adequate to make its work effective and useful to the desired degree of benefit and satisfaction to the Member States, the participating organizations and the Unit itself. Accordingly, the Unit has also, on several occasions, submitted to the General Assembly proposals to improve its work, some of which are contained in its annual reports for 1991, 1992 and 1993. 4/

50. It may be recalled in this connection that, in paragraph 15 of resolution 48/221, the General Assembly decided to keep under review some of the JIU proposals contained in paragraph 40 of the annual report for 1993. 1/ Accordingly, these proposals are before the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

51. Further, by the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the statute of the Unit as the only independent, system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body. The Unit's mandate is vast and the scope of its activities is also wide. It has great responsibilities towards Member States and the participating organizations. Equally, the Member States and the participating organizations have a responsibility towards JIU: they should visibly support the Unit, if it is to continue to perform efficiently. Accordingly, the Unit believes that the means to enhance its work will require concerted effort and interaction by the:

(a) Member States;

(b) Participating organizations;

(c) Joint Inspection Unit itself.

(a) Member States

52. Member States, through the legislative organs of the participating organizations, might wish to consider ways and means by which they could give greater attention, leadership, guidance and targeting to JIU to enhance its work and accountability. They could increase their scrutiny of the Unit's reports for possible directions and guidance to be addressed to both the Unit and the participating organizations. They could also, as already proposed by the Unit in paragraph 40 of the annual report for 1993, undertake a thorough substantive review each year of the proposed JIU programme of work and decide on specific activities which should be inspected, investigated and evaluated by the Unit with a corresponding order of priority.

53. Member States could also consider providing the Unit with adequate resources commensurate with the Unit's mandate and scope of activities. The Unit will explore, together with the executive heads of the participating organizations, the possibility of obtaining extrabudgetary resources in conformity with paragraph 12 of resolution 48/221.

(b) Participating organizations

54. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of resolution 48/221, the General Assembly requested the executive heads of the participating organizations to increase their efforts to make detailed and timely comments on JIU reports and to ensure that their governing bodies consider these reports. It also called upon those concerned to ensure that the Unit's recommendations approved by their legislative organs are implemented and to report thereon.

55. The Unit looks forward to the concrete improvement measures resulting from requests addressed to the executive heads of the participating organizations. It trusts that they will take any such further action that will promote their full cooperation with and effective support of JIU.

56. In this connection, legislative organs of the participating organizations may wish to invite JIU, when considering the Unit's reports, to participate in their deliberations. Such direct interaction with JIU on specific issues of interest to the participating organizations concerned could only enhance the Unit's work and impact. It would help to ensure a thorough review and effective follow-up of JIU recommendations.

57. Within the framework of article 12 of the Unit's statute, 5/ consideration could be given to the need for all executive heads of the participating organizations to submit regularly to their respective legislative bodies and/or the General Assembly detailed annual or biennial reports on the implementation of JIU recommendations approved by their legislative organs.

58. The executive heads of the participating organizations should endeavour to submit, in accordance with article 9 of the Unit's statute (see para. 22), specific, well-defined and sufficiently detailed and explanatory proposals formulated as much as possible on the basis of resolutions and decisions of their legislative organs.

(c) Joint Inspection Unit

59. While calling for leadership and support from Member States, JIU is at the same time fully aware that such support needs to be earned by the Unit through the relevance of its work and meaningful contribution to improving the management efficiency of the United Nations system.

60. That is why during the present reporting period the Unit has been making serious efforts to enhance its productivity and performance. As indicated earlier (see para. 48), it has taken measures, inter alia, to improve further its programming methods, particularly through more equitable distribution of topics for reports within the four priority areas; better reflection on the needs and concerns of the participating organizations; more cohesive long-term planning; establishing a roster of studies; and more scrutiny in the choice of topics for reports, taking into consideration their timeliness, relevance and cost effectiveness.

61. The Unit will make further efforts to ensure that its work is characterized by inspection, investigation or evaluation. In the process of preparing and establishing its work programme, JIU will give priority to such requests and suggestions for studies which lend themselves to the three categories cited above. When establishing its work programme, the Unit will determine - as far as possible - which studies come under what category.

62. By the same token, JIU would like to note that more inspection and evaluation will require additional field missions, necessitating additional travel funds.

63. The Unit will continue its efforts to comply rigorously with recommendations which are addressed to it by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and the legislative organs of other participating organizations. This will be a means of making the Unit's work more responsive, relevant and useful.

64. Further, JIU will search for measures to improve follow-up on the implementation of its recommendations and include the relevant information regularly in its annual reports.

65. In its future reports, the Unit will pursue more actively cost-saving measures for Member States and participating organizations and will ensure that its reports contain adequate statements of financial implications for all recommendations that could result in cost savings, as well as those situations that could require the provision of additional resources. These statements of financial implications will be developed in close consultation with the participating organizations involved.

66. As discussed in paragraphs 19 and 20 above, JIU will intensify - provided resources will be made available - its access to modern information technology in order to establish a complete and efficient database necessary for maintaining high quality output and performance. The installation of the integrated information management system will create an institutional memory database and a management tool for more effective and efficient use of existing resources without any additional financial implications. The development of this technology will also enable the Unit to have systematic information on its many past studies, some of which are still relevant. It will also help JIU to keep track of its reports and recommendations, and thus to maintain a more efficient relationship with its participating organizations.

67. These proposed developments in information technology would also have a direct impact on the productivity and performance of the Unit through a quicker process of drafting and amending reports, notes and confidential letters.

68. In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 48/221, JIU will continue to maintain close relationships with ACABQ, CPC, ICSC, the Board of Auditors, the Panel of External Auditors and organizations and bodies within the United Nations system. (For more detailed information, see paras. 98-102.)

69. The Unit is determined to continue to improve both the format and content of its reports, including action-oriented recommendations that are clear and precise as to who should implement the recommendation, how and when and at what cost. With regard to the format of JIU reports, it is intended to make them more standardized and easy to follow, for example, by using comparative tables and graphics whenever possible.

70. In conformity with article 8 of its statute and on the basis of its own initiative as well as advice from ACABQ in its report on JIU (see A/47/744, particularly paras. 14 and 15), the Unit is currently reviewing and updating its rules and procedures for carrying out its inspection, investigation and evaluation functions. The study will:

(a) Review current conventional and professional definitions of inspection, evaluation and investigation, in order to establish their relevance to the work of the Unit;

(b) Synthesize past and present internal and external thinking on these three terms so as to establish working definitions that can be followed by JIU in the conduct of its operations and to suggest appropriate methodologies and standards to be followed by the Unit;

(c) Examine the definitions developed for inspection, evaluation and investigation in the broadest system-wide context so as to advance proposals that would enhance the work of the Unit in the specific fields of activities contained in the approved work programme.

71. The Unit has already prepared and assembled a substantial amount of material, including a compendium of key background documents on the efforts over the past 15 years, inside and outside JIU, on the content of its work programme, its output, the quality of its work, and follow-up on the implementation of its recommendations. In addition, as part of its efforts for carrying out this work, the Unit has also at its disposal abstracts of selected audit and inspection guidelines from 11 well-known and recognized sources specializing in such work.

72. JIU believes that its internal study on procedures and rules of inspection, investigation and evaluation will enhance inspection and evaluation of specific fields of activities of the United Nations and other participating organizations, as requested in paragraph 13 of resolution 48/221.

73. The Unit is determined to continue efforts in the search for ways and means to make its work more relevant and useful to the Member States and the participating organizations. This is an ongoing process and the Unit will report on the improvement measures undertaken in its future annual reports.

B. Views of JIU pursuant to General Assembly decision 47/454, paragraph (b)

74. The Unit is grateful to the States Members of the United Nations for requesting its views on such a topical and pertinent issue as strengthening and improving the effectiveness of the external oversight mechanisms. The Unit takes this request as another confirmation of its role as an external oversight body whose views will be carefully considered in the forthcoming debate at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

75. The Unit's views on measures leading to further improvement and strengthening of external oversight mechanisms are interrelated and to a certain degree similar to those already described in section A of the present chapter dealing with implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/221.

76. After careful consideration of all the aspects involved, JIU concluded that support, leadership, guidance and targeting from intergovernmental and, in the first instance, from the main legislative bodies, are conditions sine qua non for a meaningful, effective and strong external oversight mechanism. It is of paramount importance that Member States give a clear message to all concerned - particularly to the secretariats of controlled organizations - that organs of external oversight enjoy their real and not pro forma support; that they are exercising oversight functions on behalf of Member States and, therefore, need to be taken seriously by the secretariats of controlled units. Only then will a proper environment be created whereby eventual resistance or reluctance to implement certain recommendations may be overcome.

77. Intergovernmental bodies need to devote enough time and attention to the external oversight units and be willing and able to lead, guide and target them on issues which are of paramount interest to Member States, as well as the efficient functioning of the organizations.

78. Both the formal and material means required for the proper functioning of oversight bodies are very important. Clear formulation of their mandates and functions, plus elimination of ambiguities which might arise in the interpretation of those functions by controlled units, is crucial. Equally important are the material means, both human and financial, to support oversight units.

79. Owing to the increased complexity and cost of the United Nations, 6/ particular attention should be paid to ensuring that those who are appointed to oversight functions possess the necessary high professional qualifications and experience. This applies equally to elected or appointed members, as well as supporting staff.

80. Related to the above is the necessity to secure the independence of staff serving these entities. This is an area where improvement is needed to eliminate possible ambiguities as to whom such staff members owe their allegiance, thus avoiding a potential conflict of loyalties. A correct interpretation of their status should be that such staff are appointed by the Secretary-General - and that the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of the United Nations apply to them - but they are working for and accountable to the oversight body to which they are assigned. In addition, practical and effective safeguards need to be established to ensure that their professional careers will not be affected adversely.

81. The Unit believes that more attention and effort should be devoted to developing practical cooperation, coordination and mutual support among external oversight organs. This is why the Unit welcomed paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 48/221, which calls for JIU to maintain a close relationship with a number of oversight organs, as well as bodies within the United Nations system, in order to ensure greater and more cost-effective coordination of their activities for the promotion of management efficiency, greater accountability and transparency of the United Nations and other participating organizations.

82. Cooperation among external oversight bodies should be defined more precisely; it should be seen as more than mere avoidance of overlap and duplication. Oversight organs should develop the practice of undertaking complementary projects, and also consider implementing larger and complex oversight projects with agreed and shared responsibilities.

83. What is needed is to move from the present approach of stressing and protecting the independence of each oversight body and their separate mandates and functions, and to develop a culture of positive cooperation among these bodies.

84. The Unit's experience and analysis of the present situation reveals a general weakness of external oversight mechanisms, that is to say that compliance and follow-up of approved recommendations emanating from these bodies is fragmented, unclear and weak.

85. Thus, a substantial improvement in the above situation leading to the creation of a system of compliance and follow-up - efficient and transparent to all concerned - seems to be a necessary requirement for furthering the effectiveness and strengthening of external oversight mechanisms.

86. The Unit welcomes the views expressed by a number of delegates in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly that compliance with and follow-up of approved recommendations emanating from external oversight bodies should be included in the functions performed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The Office should act as a focal point in these matters for the whole of the Secretariat.

87. Consequently, the Unit also believes that compliance should be part of the reporting procedure of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Secretary-General and to the General Assembly. Thus, JIU recommends that, during its early stages of operation, the Office should develop appropriate procedures and rules to implement such compliance and follow-up functions, and report thereon to the Assembly. The Unit would be happy to advise on such internal rules and procedures.

88. A corollary to the above is the broader question of cooperation and relationships between external and internal oversight mechanisms. As stated in paragraph 89 below, although the nature of external and internal oversight differs, there is a potential for developing practical cooperation between them. First of all, duplication and overlapping in oversight coverage should be eliminated through maintaining efficient operational relationships.

89. Through its report on "Accountability and oversight in the United Nations Secretariat" (A/48/420, annex), JIU added its voice to the discussion which took place during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly on the nature and specifics of external and internal oversight mechanisms. At this juncture, the Unit welcomes Assembly resolution 48/218, section II, paragraph 6, whereby a clear wish has been expressed by Member States to ensure respect for the separate and distinct roles and functions of external and internal oversight mechanisms.

90. The Unit supports the views expressed by the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors and the United Nations Board of Auditors in a letter to the President of the General Assembly, submitted in accordance with section II, paragraph 8, of resolution 48/218, on the different nature, roles and functions of the external and internal audit and oversight mechanisms in general (A/48/876, annex).

91. The Unit is in full agreement with the Panel and the Board that strong and independent external audit and oversight functions should be at the core of the accountability arrangements of the United Nations (ibid., paras. 1 and 2). This is why the Unit wishes to stress that its statutory role and functions should continue much as at present.

92. In accordance with the precepts of its statute, and in spite of its limited resources, JIU is ready to expand its coverage to include those organizations of the United Nations system which are not yet participants. Such increased coverage would complete the Unit's system-wide mandate and responsibilities.

93. The Unit pledges its readiness to participate fully in all the efforts of the General Assembly and the legislative organs of other participating organizations aimed at increasing further the effectiveness and strengthening of external oversight mechanisms.

VII. RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH THE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL OVERSIGHT BODIES AND OTHER RELEVANT BODIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

94. It has been the Unit's policy over recent years to enhance its relations and cooperation with the participating organizations and with bodies having responsibilities similar to those of JIU. This is why the Unit was greatly encouraged by paragraph 7 of resolution 48/221, in which the Assembly invited JIU to maintain a close relationship with CPC, ICSC, ACABQ, the Board of Auditors, the Panel of External Auditors and organizations and bodies within the United Nations system.

95. During the reporting period, JIU members attended the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In particular, the Unit participated in the deliberations of the Fifth Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, where a number of its reports were discussed. It also participated in sessions of the Economic and Social Council.

96. The Unit also attended the thirty-third and the first part of the thirty-fourth session of CPC, at which JIU reports were considered.

97. Members of the Unit participated in an observer capacity in various meetings and sessions of intergovernmental bodies of United Nations system organizations. To mention just a few, the Unit attended: the 1994 International Labour Conference; the first annual session of the Executive Board of UNDP; the spring session of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); and the Administrative Council of ITU.

98. During the reporting period, the scope of interactions of the Unit has also been expanded to include organizations and institutions outside the United Nations system, as well as consultations with Member States. JIU is particularly grateful for the assistance and cooperation it received from the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

99. The Unit has maintained a working relationship and practical cooperation with external oversight bodies. On various occasions, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other members of the Unit met with their counterparts in ACABQ. It is the Unit's intention to discuss how to develop further the close relationship between JIU and the Advisory Committee at the forthcoming joint meeting of the two bodies.

100. The Unit found its meeting with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission very useful. It afforded the opportunity to agree on periodic contacts between the two bodies and on exchanging documents and information of mutual interest.

101. JIU's relations with the Panel of External Auditors and the United Nations Board of Auditors have been expanded during the reporting period. Routinely, documents and information are exchanged and consultations held on substantive reports being prepared by the Unit. The exchange of views on measures of possible practical co-operation between representatives of JIU and the Technical Group of the Panel of External Auditors was very positive and constructive.

102. In August 1993, JIU established a working relationship with the newly-created internal oversight unit - Office for Inspections and Investigations (OII). Pertinent issues were discussed between Inspectors and the head of OII (Assistant Secretary-General) on a number of occasions in New York and Geneva.

103. Furthermore, within the same framework of enhancing relationships with the participating organizations, the Chairman of JIU appeared before the Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to present the Unit's work programme. The Unit's Chairman, accompanied by the Vice-Chairman and the Executive Secretary, also met with officials of a number of participating organizations. The Unit derived much from the discussions held, in particular from the views and the counsel of the executive heads and their senior officials on current topical matters of interest to the secretariats of United Nations system organizations which would give more focus to the Unit's future work. Accordingly, JIU intends to continue and expand these contacts and interactions.

VIII. SUMMARIES OF JIU REPORTS

A. Accountability and oversight in the United Nations Secretariat (JIU/REP/93/5, A/48/420, annex)

104. Inspectors examined in considerable detail accountability and oversight in the United Nations Secretariat as an initial step in a broader study of these subjects in the United Nations system. They assessed the capacity of the main internal oversight units (Internal Audit Division, Central Evaluation Unit, Central Monitoring Unit, Management Advisory Service) to carry out their functions. They found the resources and support available to these units to be seriously deficient, and found significant weaknesses as well in other accountability and oversight processes.

105. Encouraged by the present Secretary-General's commitment to reform and good management, the Inspectors put forward proposals for improving the situation.

106. Thus, they proposed the creation of an Office of Accountability and Oversight to audit, inspect, investigate and evaluate all United Nations personnel, programmes and activities for which the Secretary-General bears administrative responsibility. They suggested that the leadership of this Office, its reporting responsibilities, its staffing, funding and its relationship to external oversight bodies be determined by alternative sets of options or by a combination of elements of each.

107. Under the first option, the head of the Office of Accountability and Oversight would be appointed at the Assistant Secretary-General level by the Secretary-General in consultation with Member States, possibly with the advice of CPC and ACABQ. The Office would report at least annually to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General. It would be staffed at the level of the existing Secretariat units, be funded through regular United Nations budget processes and be subject to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of the United Nations.

108. Under the second option, the Head would be selected at the Under-Secretary-General level by the Secretary-General from a short list of candidates prepared by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. The Office would report at least annually directly to the General Assembly. It would be staffed by the head of the Office without restriction except the limits of the Office's budgetary appropriations, and would become within two years an oversight service separate from the United Nations Secretariat. The Office would be funded from the United Nations budget and the relevant extrabudgetary funds by allocation of a fixed percentage (at least one per cent) of the financial resources available to the activities for which the Office has oversight responsibilities. Voluntary contributions of funds and expert personnel will be encouraged.

109. During the final phase of this report's preparation, the Inspectors learned with pleasure of the Secretary-General's initiative in appointing an Assistant Secretary-General to head an Office for Inspections and Investigations, which incorporates the existing main oversight units. They had an opportunity to discuss with the Secretary-General's appointee his early thoughts on the characteristics and challenges of his new post. They believed that given adequate financial and staffing support, he could contribute greatly to reducing the serious deficiencies in present oversight, accountability, internal control and management improvement processes.

110. However, the Inspectors were concerned lest Member States and Secretariat managers, in a commendable zeal for economy, try to establish accountability and oversight controls "on the cheap". In the view of Inspectors, this course of action would be a highly expensive and wasteful option. Rather, adequate funding and staffing should produce substantial gains in efficiency and effectiveness which would far exceed the small budget percentage necessary to support oversight and accountability processes properly.

Recommendation 1

The General Assembly should support the recent initiative of the Secretary-General in appointing a highly-qualified professional auditor with thorough knowledge of the United Nations to the newly-created post of Assistant Secretary-General for Inspections and Investigations and should evidence this support by making available to the new Assistant Secretary-General financial and human resources which are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate to the full dimensions of his task.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General and the General Assembly, in considering the establishment of "a higher level post with broader audit, evaluation and investigation authority" to be proposed to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session, should:

(a) Carefully assess the many long-standing problems of the former oversight units and other Secretariat accountability, management improvement and internal control processes (as discussed in chapters III and IV and summarized in chapter V of the present report), to ensure that the new oversight authority will provide the most effective possible mixture of oversight functions and capabilities;

(b) Seek to institutionalize the advantages set forth in chapter VI of this report that a single, consolidated internal oversight unit would offer in the areas of accountability, independence, flexibility, transparency, professionalism, improved compliance, economies of scale and, above all, managerial improvements; and further,

(c) Take into account the parameters set forth in chapter VII of this report in defining the new entity's mandate, reporting responsibilities, staffing, funding and relationship with external oversight mechanisms.

111. The report (JIU/REP/93/5) was sent on 29 September 1993 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for action, and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information. The report was issued as document A/48/420 of 12 October 1993, and the Secretary-General's comments thereon were issued as document A/48/420/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 of 22 and 26 November 1993.

112. In its resolution 48/218 of 23 December 1993, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the General Assembly took note with appreciation of the report of JIU (sect. I.E, para. 3) and also stated, in requesting the views of other bodies on improving oversight functions, "in this regard decides to consider the relevant report of the Joint Inspection Unit" (sect. II, para. 8).

B. Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component) (JIU/REP/93/6, A/48/421, annex)

113. One of the major new developments in United Nations peace-keeping is its progressive evolution towards greater involvement of civilian personnel. Some 11,000 civilians, recruited both internally and locally, are serving in United Nations ongoing peace-keeping and related missions. In view of the number and ever-important functions entrusted to civilians, their overall impact on the performance of peace-keeping operations can hardly be overestimated and is, therefore, of topical importance for Member States.

114. The present report addresses the issue of staffing of the civilian component of peace-keeping operations in several of its aspects. It first considers the problems of planning and management of peace-keeping operations at Headquarters and in the field, including the functioning of the relevant structures and measures being carried out to improve coordination and interaction between different departments and other organizational units involved. It further examines the evolution of the civilian component, sources and procedures of recruitment of civilian staff, problems of their training and conditions of service.

Recommendation 1

On the basis of their analysis, the Inspectors suggested, inter alia, the following measures aimed at enhancing the Secretariat's capacity and effectiveness in managing peace-keeping operations:

(a) Better delineation of authority between the Secretariat entities concerned, with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations being the central department to deal with peace-keeping operations;

(b) Strengthening of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations by experienced and competent civilian and military personnel;

(c) Merging the Field Operations Division into the Department of Peace-keeping Operations;

(d) Establishing a core team responsible for peace-keeping operations;

(e) Establishing a post of "Police Commissioner";

(f) Strengthening of the recently established 24-hour situation room;

(g) Designating focal point(s) to deal with queries from Member States.

Recommendation 2

Regarding the functioning of field structures, the Inspectors recommended:

(a) Establishment of clear lines of authority and interrelationship between the major officials participating in missions;

(b) Creating or strengthening, wherever they exist, joint operation centres which should function on a 24-hour basis;

(c) Delegating more administrative and financial authority to the field.

Recommendations 3, 4 and 5

Having examined deficiencies in staffing the civilian component, the Inspectors recommended:

(a) Establishing a "pre-certified" roster, as well as a roster of selected retirees, particularly those with field experience;

(b) More extensive recruitment of United Nations Volunteers and local staff;

(c) Facilitation and encouragement of secondment of specialized agencies' staff to peace-keeping operations;

(d) More extensive outside recruitment of professionals, wherever possible;

(e) Further examination of resorting to contractual arrangements;

(f) Creating within Member States a stand-by reserve of civilians to serve in peace-keeping operations;

(g) Secondment of civilian personnel to peace-keeping operations by regional organizations;

(h) Establishing new recruitment policies and procedures with a better field orientation.

Recommendation 6

With regard to improvement of briefing and training, the Inspectors' suggestions may be summarized as follows:

(a) Institutionalization and standardization of briefing and training;

(b) Developing special training programmes for senior personnel;

(c) Better utilization of United Nations training facilities for purposes related to peace-keeping operations;

(d) Utilization of facilities and human resources of Member States and regional organizations for United Nations standardized training.

Recommendation 7

With regard to conditions of service in peace-keeping and related missions, the Inspectors recommended that:

(a) Mission assignments should continue to be voluntary;

(b) The principle of rotation between the relevant departments and the field should be adopted;

(c) Security of personnel should become part of mission support and be included in mission planning, briefing and training;

(d) A code of conduct while on missions should be established;

(e) Extending the applicability of hazard pay beyond staff members be considered by ICSC;

(f) New and more flexible staff rules and staff regulations, staff policies and relevant procedures should be promulgated.

115. The report (JIU/REP/93/6) was sent for action on 29 September 1993 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information.

C. Analysis of cost savings from JIU reports and notes, 1985-1992 (JIU/REP/93/7, A/48/606, annex)

116. The report analyses the 394 recommendations contained in the 74 reports and notes issued by JIU between 1 January 1985 and 31 December 1992 for their cost savings implications. Of these, 30 specific recommendations in 14 reports and notes were identified as particularly susceptible to quantifying possible cost savings.

117. The participating organizations of JIU assisted appreciably in quantifying the selected recommendations and the Unit is grateful for the excellent cooperation received from them in an admittedly difficult task.

118. As a result of this detailed review and analysis, the report identified $78,400,000 in cost savings which resulted, or could have resulted, from the implementation of JIU recommendations over the eight-year period under review. This amount compares very favourably with the $24 million it took to operate the Unit over the same period.

119. However, the Inspectors recognize that the insistence on maximum possible agency verification and the elimination of many recommendations from consideration because of significantly greater difficulties in quantification have resulted in less than full justice being done to the savings inherent in those recommendations which have not been selected. Nevertheless, the rigour and conservatism of the analysis applied in the report and the difficulties implicit in the quantification process have persuaded the Inspectors in the future to:

(a) Be more specific and action-oriented in formulating their recommendations;

(b) Seek, in close consultation with the participating organizations, to identify the programme budget implications (expenditures and cost savings) of their recommendations;

(c) Continue to welcome proposals from ACABQ that the Unit inspect or investigate matters coming to the Advisory Committee's attention during its examination of budgets, financial accounts and other reports and documentation of the participating organizations;

(d) Focus more rigorously on the potential for cost savings in developing and carrying out the Unit's work programme.

120. The report (JIU/REP/93/7) was sent to the executive heads of all JIU participating organizations for information on 9 November 1993.

D. United Nations system support for science and technology in Africa (JIU/REP/94/1)

121. Since the adoption in 1979 of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development, 7/ this subject has consistently received high priority on the development agendas of United Nations system policy organs and intergovernmental conferences. However, only scant information is being reported to the policy organs on actual field project outputs, their dissemination and socio-economic spill-over effects in the productive sectors of the developing countries.

122. As a contribution to remedying that gap, the Inspectors undertook to evaluate the operational performance and effective outputs of a selected number of institution-building projects in the area of science and technology in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean in three separate reports. In the report, which focuses on Africa, the Inspectors synthesize their preliminary evaluation findings and lessons and, additionally, assess the African regional setting for science and technology and the supportive role of the United Nations system.

123. The report concluded that, to help stimulate and expand science and technology development in Africa, the organizations should concentrate increasingly on a few strategic areas in which they have some degree of comparative advantage. Examples of such areas are: policy reform initiatives coordinated with macroeconomic adjustment programmes supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, building of science and technology awareness at the upper rungs of government departments, strengthening of policy and institutional capacities as well as efficiency reforms in national public administrations through the application of appropriate organization and management technologies designed to streamline and expedite decision-making, simplify information flow and paperwork, and modernize and strengthen management accountability systems.

124. The report makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Institution-building functions

Organizations of the United Nations system should refine and adopt at the level of ACC, mutatis mutandis, the 10 institution-building functions used in the present report as a normative framework for the design, execution and evaluation of institution-building projects in the low income countries generally and in the least developed countries (LDCs) more particularly. The framework should be incorporated into the technical cooperation policies and procedures manuals of the organizations.

Recommendation 2: Sustainability

All institution-building project proposals should be justified by a thorough pre-feasibility analysis of the long-term cost benefits and financial sustainability of the supported institution, as the main

condition for United Nations system support, and self-financing project activities should be encouraged and reflected in project designs whenever appropriate. The relative cost effectiveness of different implementation strategies and tools should also be examined.

Recommendation 3: Programme approach

The programme approach to technical cooperation mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 44/211 should be applied more systematically and comprehensively to institution-building projects.

Recommendation 4: Technical backstopping

(a) All funding organizations of the United Nations system should consider the possibility of a set of penalties, to be agreed upon at the level of ACC, so that the designation of executing agency is made subject to past performance, which also take into account the performance of national counterpart institutions.

(b) Project agreements should explicitly specify and quantify the direct technical inputs to be provided by the regular personnel of the executing agency within or outside the United Nations system (e.g., total man/months to be devoted to the project, number of technical missions to be conducted, volume of science and technology literature to be produced or provided to the project).

Recommendation 5: Chief Technical Advisers

Justification for the Chief Technical Advisers' position should be very clearly established for projects supporting well-established institutions at the national or regional level, which should be used increasingly as implementing agencies.

Recommendation 6: Linkages to the production system

The end-users targeted by institution-building projects should, to the extent feasible, be involved in the design and planning stages of such projects, and linkages to the production system and to the private sector more particularly should be specified clearly in project agreements, depending on the nature and objectives of the project and local conditions.

Recommendation 7: Regional setting

Within the framework of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should:

(a) Initiate discussions at the highest level of ACC concerning the possibility of increased United Nations system policy and programmatic collaboration in support of science and technology capacity-building in Africa, especially in the key areas identified in chapter III of the report;

(b) Consider the feasibility and timeliness of establishing a few pilot science and technology strategic institutions of national or subregional scope;

(c) Undertake consultations in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for Development in Africa in the 1990s on the possibility of a summit meeting by the Organization of African Unity on science and technology for development in Africa, with substantive contributions from all organizations of the United Nations system.

125. The report (JIU/REP/94/1) was sent on 20 June 1994 to the executive heads of all JIU participating organizations for action.

E. Regional presence of the International Telecommunication Union (JIU/REP/94/2)

126. The Administrative Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) at its 1993 session requested JIU to carry out "an external evaluation of the ITU regional presence". In response to this request, JIU reviewed the cost benefits of ITU's regional presence, which consists of the Organization's decentralized regional and area offices in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The JIU report also examined the structure, functioning and management of field offices, as well as the extent of authority delegated to these offices to ensure their optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

127. The report's findings revealed that ITU's regional presence, as of now, procures substantial savings in salary and mission travel costs and that the field offices are playing a valuable role in helping to sharpen ITU's sensitivity and responsiveness to specific regional situations and telecommunication development problems in the field.

128. The report concluded that the significant changes that have occurred in the international technical cooperation setting in recent years, and the new programme strategy of the Bureau for the Development of Telecommunications (BDT) for the period 1995-1999, provide an appropriate context for evolving a more coherent decentralized model that forms an integral part of ITU's programme management system.

129. The following recommendations are put forward:

Recommendation 1: Technical and programme issues

ITU should consider making more explicit the following functions for its field officers, among other new priorities:

(a) Regional presence should to the extent feasible cover both the normative or specialized agency functions of ITU and its technical cooperation or executing agency functions. The existing post descriptions would need some adjustments to be adapted accordingly;

(b) The field offices should contribute substantive inputs into the preparation and conduct of regional and world conferences of the Union and should be involved fully in the field implementation of the decisions of those conferences;

(c) Relationships should be further strengthened, wherever necessary, between the field offices and United Nations regional commissions and other intergovernmental organizations concerned wholly or partly with the telecommunication development sector.

(d) ITU should further enhance the role and means of the field offices as channels for the dissemination of technical and management information between the global and regional levels, on the one hand, and national telecommunication administrations, on the other;

(e) Relationships between the field offices and the private sector and funding organizations should be further clarified and formalized.

Recommendation 2: Management issues

(a) Consideration should be given to the feasibility and timeliness of consolidating the field offices into single regional offices as in the Arab States, coupled with other structural adjustments that may be necessary in their relations with BDT headquarters, in order to improve overall coherence and coordination between the field and headquarters.

(b) The present classification of the posts of field officers should be further reviewed to ensure that they fully reflect actual responsibilities, functions and expected outputs of the incumbents, as well as the job market situation in specific ITU disciplines; the possibility should also be studied of classifying some of these posts at the P-3 or P-4 level;

(c) The directives concerning regional presence set forth in ITU document 45/6967 of July 1993 and quoted in the report should be fully implemented;

(d) An official brochure or administrative circular should be published on the role and responsibilities of the regional offices and distributed to all concerned, including all ITU headquarters officials and member administrations. The brochure or circular could be updated periodically to reflect whatever changes may be introduced in the course of time in the regional offices and their relations with the countries and headquarters;

(e) The staffing and personnel administration of field offices should ensure that:

(i) The internationally-recruited Professional staff of the field offices reflect the universal character of the Union;

(ii) There is an appropriate system of field staff rotation (e.g., every four years) among the different regions and between the field level and headquarters, to the extent feasible, taking into account the need for appropriate language skills;

(iii) The field offices rely increasingly for their programme of work on qualified and competent national Professional officers on special services contracts, junior Professional officers provided free of charge by some donor countries and short-term consultants for specific assignments, with resources for these purposes being allocated to and managed by the field offices within established accountability rules and procedures;

(iv) The field offices receive periodic audit and evaluation coverage to ensure that the Union's financial and staff regulations and rules are being effectively applied at all duty stations;

(v) The heads of regional offices meet yearly or every two years at ITU headquarters to discuss common issues of regional presence with relevant headquarters officials, and that a formal mechanism is established at headquarters to ensure systematic circulation, follow-up and feedback on the periodic reports of the regional directors;

(f) The reorganized/consolidated regional offices should be supplied with an appropriate minimum of experienced ITU support personnel for the reasons given in the report and in ITU's internal evaluation report.

Recommendation 3: ITU's internal evaluation of its regional presence

The Inspectors further recommend that the Council endorse the conclusions and recommendations of ITU's internal evaluation report on the subject at hand.

130. The report (JIU/REP/94/2) was sent on 20 May 1994 to the Secretary-General of ITU for action, and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information.

F. Advancement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat in an era of "human resources management" and "accountability": a new beginning? (JIU/REP/94/3)

131. The topic of women's advancement in the United Nations Secretariat has been around for so many years that any new study may be considered annoying. Women are dissatisfied when they consider the painfully slow progress that has been made. Some male staff fear being pushed aside by ambitious new hiring and promotion targets. In addition, many decision makers dislike being reminded again of this seemingly endless piece of unfinished business.

132. The determined pursuit of gender equity in the Secretariat, however, is not an onerous burden, but a "multiple win" situation for the United Nations as a whole. It allows the Organization to achieve the "equal rights" principle called for by the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments. It strengthens the credibility and world-wide leadership role that the United Nations seeks in its many programmes for the advancement of women. It allows well-qualified women already in the Secretariat, at all levels, their rightful opportunities for rewarding careers and contributions. It also allows the United Nations to staff its programmes with the best talent available by increasing access to the one half of the world's population that it has not fully considered in the past.

133. Despite many United Nations declarations and conventions, two decades of detailed General Assembly resolutions and strong policy statements and targets of past and current Secretaries-General, a decade's worth of "action programmes" to improve women's status in the Secretariat have been ineffective and have lost their momentum.

134. These programmes have concentrated on achieving numerical targets of Professional women staff. Analysis of the situation has not been systematic and well focused, but available statistics do show unsatisfactory or poor progress in almost all areas. More importantly, the major obstacles to women's advancement - in recruitment, career development, training, work/family-related

issues and grievance redress systems - have been much talked about, but scarcely reduced.

135. The one significant area of change has been the strong emphasis by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and staff in 1992 and 1993 on new human resources management approaches. This emphasis, and a new accountability and responsibility system due to come into effect in January 1995, can be of great value not only to increase Secretariat effectiveness overall, but to achieve finally and firmly the Assembly's and the Secretary-General's long-stated policies for advancement of the status of women in the Secretariat. Action is needed now to convert the strong policy words of 1993 into firm corrective deeds in 1994. Only with decisive actions can the United Nations finally begin to establish an integrated and dynamic human resources management system.

136. The Inspector makes the following four recommendations as initial, essential steps to build this system and thus attain women's advancement within it, as well as benefits to the United Nations Secretariat:

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General should continue the "comprehensive report" on personnel matters which the General Assembly has requested for 1994 as a biennial human resources report. This report should provide policy makers with a systematic, integrated, transparent and results-oriented assessment of progress and results in managing what is now recognized as the Organization's "most precious asset".

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General should strengthen the human resources capacities of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), as often called for but not yet acted upon, by creating a small, specialized planning and analysis staff in the Office; enhancing the human resources management skills of present and future OHRM staff; and regularly reviewing the Office's workloads and staffing to ensure its capacity and authority to carry out its critical management responsibilities.

Recommendation 3

(a) The Secretary-General should greatly increase accountability and follow-up in personnel programmes through an emphasis on much more substantive data and analysis, and the inclusion of systematic follow-up of the reviews made by oversight bodies, in the proposed human resources report.

(b) The longer-run operational effectiveness of United Nations programmes will be greatly strengthened if its "most precious resource" - the staff - is enhanced by the above human resources initiatives. However, while these elements are critically important to advance women's status, they are not enough.

(c) The "action programmes" for women's advancement have proved ineffective, not only because the many quantitative targets have not been met, but because the underlying organizational climate and personnel processes of the Secretariat have scarcely changed. To avoid a serious loss of credibility in an area where the United Nations wants to provide world-wide leadership and to respond finally to two decades of General

Assembly resolutions on advancing the status of women in the Secretariat, a new results-oriented programme is needed, now.

Recommendation 4

The General Assembly and the Secretary-General should replace the ineffective current women's "action programme" with a new programme to implement existing policies firmly and advance women's status, including but not limited to the following 10 steps:

(a) A new Senior Advisory Panel on Management and Finance should regularly review, and actively accept responsibility for, advancing women's status, particularly in senior posts;

(b) The Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat and the Secretary-General should resume their reporting efforts with much more emphasis on follow-up, analysis and new directions;

(c) Modest but long-overdue consultant services should be obtained to assist the Steering Committee in implementing the above responsibilities;

(d) Particularly in the light of the continuing lack of a career development system in the Secretariat, the Focal Point for Women should rebuild, or build, a world-wide network of Secretariat focal points and committees to keep women staff fully informed and involved in their own advancement;

(e) As part of the new Secretariat-wide system of accountability and responsibility, office and department heads and programme managers should be held fully accountable for implementing established policies for women's advancement, reporting thereon and taking needed follow-up actions, as often called for but never yet put into practice;

(f) A planned study of the secretarial occupation should be only the first of a series of analyses to improve the situation and prospects of the thousands of women General Service staff, and General Service staff overall;

(g) OHRM should certify that recruitment procedures to ensure women's equal opportunity are followed and documented, and review and oversight bodies should also periodically inspect these certifications;

(h) The expert consultants should help to identify new cost-effective ways to contact highly-qualified women from all countries, who are increasingly available in the new global labour markets;

(i) Member States should do their part by submitting women candidates regularly and by increasing women's roles in their delegations and Permanent Missions to the United Nations;

(j) The new programme should pursue diversity training, workplace issues and full and fair implementation of sexual harassment grievance processes, and also consider new issues such as women's roles in special missions.

137. The report (JIU/REP/94/3) was sent on 26 May 1994 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for action, and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information.

G. Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/94/4)

138. For the fulfilment of the increased involvement of the United Nations system in the field of development, humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations, efficient communication is essential. The report deals with the notion of communication per se (not to be confused with the technical means of communication such as telecommunications, informatics, postal services and similar devices), as applied specifically to development.

139. Investigation of the present situation regarding communication in development programmes shows that it is far from satisfactory. Equally unsatisfactory is the level of inter-agency coordination, aggravated by the lack of appropriate mechanisms within the United Nations system to discuss regularly and methodically the policies and implementation of programmes for development.

140. The Inspector has established that, in the United Nations bodies, agencies, non-governmental organizations and in the institutions outside the system, such as academic circles, there is awareness of and concern about the need for effective communication structures to enhance the successful implementation of development programmes. Investigation of the subject-matter has shown that communication also plays an important role in humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations.

141. Against this background, the report:

(a) Proposes a definition of the notion of communication for development and its scope;

(b) Examines the status of communication programmes of United Nations bodies and agencies;

(c) Reviews existing arrangements for the coordination of communication programmes for development;

(d) Examines the possibility of setting up appropriate structures to improve cooperation and strengthen communication activities in the field of humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations.

142. To this end, the report proposes a series of recommendations, the most significant of which relate to:

Recommendation 1: Decisions on policy and resources for communication

(a) The policy of communication should be established within each department of an agency dealing with development and humanitarian assistance;

(b) The budgets of all projects and programmes should contain a specific provision for communication activities.

Recommendation 2: Location of communication units

The major role of communication in the United Nations system is to help programme managers to make their work understood primarily within their own Organization, secondly among the sister agencies and, most important of all, by the beneficiaries. The task of information divisions is to disseminate information about the activities of United Nations organizations. There is thus a clear distinction between the two different functions. At present, communication units are located within the information divisions of most organizations with the exception of two where they are placed in programme divisions. This situation diminishes the importance of communication for development, which is not exclusively public information. Therefore, communication units should enjoy a certain autonomy and have direct functional relations with the various organizational offices dealing with field activities.

Recommendation 4: Coordination

In order to improve system-wide coordination in the area of communication for development, action has to be taken at headquarters and country levels. At the headquarters of agencies, there should be a unit within the policy-making division which would assume the responsibility of coordinating communication activities. At the country level, improved coordination should be sought by using fully the team of agency representatives within the Resident Coordinator system.

Recommendation 6: Round-table conference

Lack of a regular forum of discussions and exchange of views on development and humanitarian assistance communication programmes resulted in the evolution of an informal round-table conference for development communication. Consecutive round-table meetings have demonstrated their usefulness for practical cooperation. Times are ripe for a better organized system of coordination. To achieve this objective, the existing Information Round-Table process should be regularized. It should include all United Nations agencies and the regional commissions and should take into account the mandate of UNESCO on communication.

Recommendation 8: Training

(a) Owing to the fact that there is a lack of trained communication experts globally and in particular in developing countries, the organizations of the United Nations system should develop systematic training. From such training, field workers/development agents and technicians should benefit, as well as communication planners and specialists at the higher level;

(b) Academic institutions in developing and developed countries should be encouraged to include curricula for development communication;

(c) With the aim of cost saving, the use of existing infrastructures and facilities of the United Nations system, namely, the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Training Centre at Turin, should be considered by the appropriate ACC subsidiary body;

(d) Funds for financing these training programmes should be provided within the communication component budget and be allocated at the inception of projects.

143. The report (JIU/REP/94/4) was sent for action to the executive heads of all JIU participating organizations.

H. Towards a new system of performance appraisal in the United Nations Secretariat: requirements for successful implementation (JIU/REP/94/5, A/49/219, annex)

144. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/218, called for "the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility no later than 1 January 1995" and further specified that this system should include "performance evaluation for all officials".

145. The United Nations has attempted to evaluate/appraise the performance of its personnel for many years, but staff, the Administration and, in recent years, the General Assembly have expressed strong dissatisfaction with the process. JIU decided to investigate this situation in response to a request from the United Nations Secretariat, concerns expressed by Member States in the General Assembly, and as part of the Unit's continuing work on issues of accountability and oversight in the Secretariat and in the United Nations system.

146. The objective of the above-mentioned report is to highlight key problems and lessons learned from past experience, and to identify actions required to help ensure that the new Secretariat performance appraisal system will finally provide the effective system that the United Nations very much needs.

147. Performance appraisal is complex and difficult, but during the last decade many organizations have gained hard-earned experience about what works and what does not, and have made considerable progress in establishing and using performance-based systems. The United Nations Secretariat, however, has not participated in this process.

148. The Inspector found five different attempts to create a sound performance evaluation system in the Secretariat during the past 17 years. In spite of some improvements made to the system, however, they all failed because the Secretariat was unable to implement them successfully. Much time and effort have been expended on performance evaluation paperwork. Unfortunately, the system provides only the illusion of performance evaluation, as bluntly recognized by many of the people involved over the years.

149. Past and present performance evaluation efforts of the Secretariat fail because they measure the characteristics and traits of staff subjectively, rather than their actual performance and work accomplished. The system as implemented at present not only gives vague ratings, but also "excellent" or "very good" ratings to almost all staff. This makes the system meaningless for promotion, placement and other career development purposes. Staff move through their careers with occasional promotions and steady salary step increases for longevity, unaffected by the work they actually do.

150. This system is dysfunctional. It provides no reward or recognition for excellent performance and no sanctions or corrective actions for ineffective, mediocre or apathetic staff.

151. The most recent substantive attempt to change the Secretariat performance evaluation system occurred a decade ago. It has taken steadily increasing pressure from the General Assembly, beginning in 1986 and culminating in the January 1995 deadline above, to force a new system. The Secretariat is now in the process of preparing, for a sixth time, to test and install it.

152. There is currently great pressure on all international organizations, and indeed all public organizations, to perform effectively and use their scarce resources well. The General Assembly, the Secretary-General and recent JIU and other reports have emphasized repeatedly since 1992 that the United Nations must urgently replace its old bureaucratic routines with a much more dynamic and responsive organizational culture.

153. The new performance appraisal system is all the more important: (a) as a central component of the new system of accountability and responsibility; (b) to change the basic nature of supervisor-staff relationships; and (c) above all to make a fundamental change in the organizational climate throughout the United Nations Secretariat. Under the old performance evaluation system, good or bad performance simply had no consequences. Now, performance, results and fulfilment of programme mandates and objectives must become the central elements of the work of staff at all levels.

Recommendation 1

To establish and continually enhance the new performance appraisal system, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly should monitor the development and implementation of the new system very carefully, particularly in its initial stages. They should also see that the system incorporates the following requirements for success.

Recommendation 2

To provide the full commitment which such a major change in organizational culture requires, the Secretary-General should:

(a) Take determined actions to install, implement and steadily improve the broad new system of accountability and responsibility, which is essential to support proper functioning of the new performance appraisal system;

(b) Ensure highly visible, and continuous, top management commitment and support for the new performance appraisal system, particularly to overcome the poor record of, and understandably negative staff attitudes towards, past performance evaluation efforts;

(c) Establish clear guidance and roles for all managers/supervisors throughout the Secretariat, as well as special training, to enable them to carry out effectively their critical new responsibilities for work planning, continuous dialogue with staff, a results-oriented culture, and management of both the human and the financial resources entrusted to them.

Recommendation 3

To implement the key technical elements of the new performance appraisal system properly throughout the Secretariat, the Secretary-General should:

(a) Give high priority to the difficult but essential task of establishing an integrated system linking mandates, objectives, strategies, work programmes and individual staff performance agreements and standards as a basis for both sound staff performance appraisal and more effective overall programme performance - a mission statement by the Secretary-General is necessary;

(b) Ensure objective, transparent, distinct and fair ratings, with special attention to probationary staff, make the new performance appraisal reports the key input to placement and promotion decisions and respond to the General Assembly's call for firm sanctions for poor performance;

(c) Establish a formal, full-time unit to carry out properly the high-priority, large-scale management project which the performance appraisal system certainly represents, and to perform performance management tasks and system improvement in the future, including annual reporting to the General Assembly as earlier requested but not implemented.

Recommendation 4

In order to permit proper introduction of the new performance appraisal system in an organizational climate which at present is clearly not prepared for it, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General should consider:

(a) Revising and expanding staff training plans for the new system to ensure that all Secretariat staff understand and are prepared for the new system, rather than continuing the present rush to complete training by December 1994 without adequate resources;

(b) Based on the hard-earned experience of other organizations and recognizing the drastic change which the new system represents in the United Nations organizational culture, making 1995 a transitional year for introduction of the new system, so that it can be established as firmly as possible, particularly since it requires support from other accountability and responsibility elements not yet in place;

(c) Providing the additional financial resources which the new system requires, which could come from delaying staff salary increments temporarily for redeployment to the above urgent training purposes, and in future providing such increments (and freeing up future management training funds and/or realizing cost savings) only under the performance-based rationale for which they were originally established.

154. The report (JIU/REP/94/5) was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for action, and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information.

I. Review and assessment of efforts to restructure the regional dimension of United Nations economic and social activities (JIU/REP/94/6, A/49/423, annex)

155. The report reviews past and current efforts to restructure the regional dimension of United Nations economic and social activities. It explains the difficulties encountered and reasons why past efforts did not achieve the results that had been sought.

156. The report also examines the current restructuring exercise which has enjoyed two key advantages in comparison with previous attempts, namely, a much less confrontational climate in the Organization's governing bodies and the leadership role of the Secretary-General. His deep commitment to the restructuring is commendable but, regretfully, has lost its momentum, inter alia, as a result of: (a) the recent decline of interest on the part of Member States for restructuring of the economic and social sectors; (b) insufficient guidance given to the Secretary-General in this area; (c) absence of a prior substantive analysis as to complementarity of functions of and future cooperation and coordination mechanisms for the various entities of the United Nations, both at and away from Headquarters; (d) non-performance of the Secretariat to produce an analytical report repeatedly requested by Member States on the programmatic impact, as well as the financial implications, of the organizational changes made in the course of the current restructuring process; and (e) lack of an accountable official who would deal with and be responsible for all aspects of restructuring, including decentralization.

157. Underlying many of these problems is another general issue: the lack of a clearly defined strategic analysis and strategic planning responsibility; an organization such as the United Nations should have to be able to respond promptly and effectively to the new challenges with which it is being confronted.

158. In order to give a further impetus to restructuring of the economic and social sectors in general, and decentralization to the regional level in particular, the Inspector suggests a number of corrective measures in the recommendations that follow:

Recommendation 1

Member States may wish to: (a) reaffirm their conviction of the urgent need to give a further impetus to the slowed down process of restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations; and (b) give the Secretary-General more specific guidance for restructuring the economic and social parts of the Secretariat. They may also wish to take more coordinated positions in the legislative bodies of United Nations system organizations on such issues as roles and programmes of the respective economic and social bodies, as well as on restructuring and decentralization.

Recommendation 2

Member States may wish to give careful consideration to establishing a strategic analysis and strategic planning facility in the United Nations Secretariat to supply the Secretary-General with the necessary substantive input into his strategic thinking and decision-making process. This facility should not replace the substantive technical thinking and planning that other departments are providing, but concentrate on general strategic organizational and management aspects from the overall perspective of the United Nations.

Recommendation 3

In accordance with the request of the General Assembly to establish a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility in the United Nations Secretariat and, in the light of failures over the last several years, to make substantial progress in this important area, the

Inspector believes it is critical to designate a competent senior official with extensive managerial experience, who will be a focal point and held accountable for the firm implementation of the current restructuring process.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General is requested to prepare as soon as possible a specific report which, inter alia, should:

(a) Clearly describe functions and responsibilities of the various United Nations entities operating in the economic and social fields;

(b) Contain a substantive analysis as to their complementarity;

(c) Describe mechanisms for coordinating their activities;

(d) Contain the Secretary-General's ideas concerning the restructuring measures he intends to propose in the short and medium terms.

Recommendation 5

The activities of the commissions in regional cooperation should take into account the importance of the work of other United Nations regional agencies, as well as that of global organizations (e.g., multilateral financial institutions), bilateral donors, and of non-governmental organizations active in the same or adjacent areas. The regional commissions should make an inventory of these organizations together with an analysis of their areas of competence and programmes of work in order to: (a) determine the areas where the regional commissions can be most effective; (b) establish closer cooperation with them; and (c) ensure complementarity of action.

Recommendation 6

Within the context of implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/235 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/43, the Secretary-General is requested to undertake discussions with the executive heads of the United Nations funding agencies on the most rational use and financing of the operational capacity of the regional commissions. Greater involvement of the regional commissions as executing agencies of regional and subregional projects, and national projects with specific regional focus, financed by these agencies should be seriously considered.

Recommendation 7

Member States, through their representatives in the legislative bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system, may wish to accord the necessary support to the Secretary-General's initiatives aimed at strengthening the coordinating and team leadership role of the regional commissions.

159. The report (JIU/REP/94/6) was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for action, and to the other participating organizations of JIU for information.

J. Staff turnover and delays in recruitment (the lapse factor) (JIU/REP/94/7)

160. Historically, the lapse factor came from a natural phenomenon arising from staff turnover and delays in recruitment. Member States realized that the delays resulted in "savings" and in many organizations of the United Nations system it gradually became a "personnel policy for savings".

161. For several decades, the financial situation in most organizations remained stable and that allowed for the establishment of new posts, which in turn produced vacancies and corresponding delays in recruitment. As a consequence, fixing a lapse factor percentage was not seen as too rigid a practice preventing the sound execution of programmes.

162. However, the financial situation of some organizations has changed in later years and they were faced with financial difficulties, which led them to reduce dramatically the number of their posts. Such was the case at UNESCO, which had to abolish about 800 posts. The United Nations is no better off and a freeze in recruitment ordered in 1985 has only recently been abolished by the General Assembly in resolution 48/228 of 23 December 1993.

163. While some organizations seem to have been able to cope with their existing percentage of lapse factor, in many cases it imposed artificial limitations on recruitment that not only affected the execution of important programmes, but even forced the termination of staff in order to reach the level of vacancies, thus affecting staff morale.

164. The Inspector undertook a number of investigation missions, preceded by a questionnaire to organizations of the United Nations system, with a view to determining whether the present practices used for the lapse factor were adequate or needed review and revision. It was clear from his analysis, following discussions with officials in various organizations, that there is no standard practice throughout the United Nations system with regard to a lapse factor or a vacancy rate reduction and that the most notable feature is the lack of a common approach to the budgetary mechanism across the United Nations system.

165. The Inspector arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) The lapse factor, which was at the beginning a formulation to reflect the fortuitous savings linked to a normal staff turnover, has developed ion some organizations - under the pressure of Member States - into a way to adjust the budget artificially and obtain savings on staff costs;

(b) The techniques employed in the organizations for calculating this budgetary adjustment vary, each one having its own approach;

(c) One modality commonly used is the differentiation of the lapse factor percentage between Professional categories and General Service and related categories;

(d) Given the specific and particular nature of many programmes in the organizations of the United Nations system, specialists have to be recruited, sometimes at short notice. A high lapse factor is the first cause of longer delays in recruitment, thus preventing scarce staff resources to be deployed in such a manner as to carry out satisfactorily the programmes approved by Member States.

166. The set of recommendations listed below and proposed by the Inspector in his report aims at enabling policy makers to review the capacity for organizations to work with a given lapse factor, reflecting on the most important aspect of the work of many organizations: the execution of their programmes as regards quality-quantity and financial considerations.

Recommendation 1

In the interest of harmonizing budgeting methods, techniques and presentation, the organizations should employ a common and clear terminology and definition of the lapse factor. There should be a clear understanding of the use and definition of that technique, in order to come closer to a commonly accepted practice, but keeping in mind the difficulties faced in each individual organization.

Recommendation 2

The long-applied practice of the lapse factor should be maintained as a useful instrument to reflect a natural phenomenon, producing fortuitous savings as a result of varying recruitment practices and constraints: however, it should not be forced as a mandatory adjustment to compel delay in filling budgeted posts to the detriment of the programme.

Recommendation 3

Member States should agree that this matter requires flexibility in its implementation in order to allow for realistic savings without affecting the execution of programmes, keeping in mind changing circumstances and the difficulties faced in each individual organization.

Recommendation 4

UNESCO, which has experienced serious difficulties in this area, may follow the practice now being used in most of the large organizations, namely, to have a different lapse factor percentage applied to Professional and higher posts to that of General Service posts, in order to achieve more flexibility.

167. The report (JIU/REP/94/7) was sent to the executive heads of all JIU participating organizations for action.

K. United Nations system common premises and services in the field (JIU/REP/94/8)

168. Successive General Assembly resolutions on operational activities for development since 1987 contain explicit provisions requiring organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to achieve, as far as practicable, integrated field structures and services without additional costs to the organizations and to the developing countries. In line with these resolutions, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has also forcefully promoted the principle of a unified United Nations system presence at the country level as one of the means of facilitating inter-agency collaboration, reducing the overhead costs of programme delivery and enhancing the image of the United Nations family in the field.

169. The report defines the objectives that should guide organizations of the system in the development and expansion of common premises and services world wide, such as achieving maximum cost savings, serving as a model of efficiency and coordination worthy of emulation by host country departments and services, improving the working and living conditions of field-based staff, and promoting the broader policy objectives of operational activities for development.

170. Drawing upon the commendable work already accomplished by member organizations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), which comprises UNDP, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNFPA and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the report concludes that the global development of common premises and services will have significant long-term cost benefits for the organizations and for the Member States.

171. Among other measures, the report recommends:

Recommendation 1

The legislative bodies of the specialized agencies should provide more specific policy instructions requiring their respective secretariats to participate more systematically in the development of common premises and services in the field.

Recommendation 2

The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should strengthen its policy commitment to the objective of achieving integrated field premises and services as enjoined by the United Nations General Assembly and, to that end, should examine the feasibility and timeliness of transforming the JCGP Sub-Group on Common Premises and services into an ACC subcommittee charged with designing and implementing a system-wide programme of common premises and services.

Recommendation 3

A framework of principles should be developed by ACC to guide the achievement and functioning of common premises and services in order to ensure, inter alia, that investment costs are economically realistic and can be recovered fully, that all participants in common premises and services enjoy due rights and benefits, and that optimal efficiency and effectiveness can be guaranteed in their operations.

IX. FOLLOW-UP OF JIU REPORTS

Implementation of recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

172. Each year, the Secretary-General issues a report on the implementation of recommendations of the Unit which, in turn, makes comments on this report. In paragraph 6 of resolution 48/221, the General Assembly called upon JIU to follow up on the implementation of its recommendations and to include the relevant information regularly in its annual reports.

173. Upon receipt of the report of the Secretary-General, JIU intends to provide its required observations in an addendum to the present report.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/38/34).

2/ Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/46/34), para. 25 (c).

3/ The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, fifth ed. (Oxford, 1964), p. 1057; The New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language (Danbury, CT, 1992), p. 846.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/46/34), paras. 12-15; ibid., Forty-seventh Session, paras. 13-15; and ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/48/34), para. 40.

5/ Article 12 reads: "Executive heads of organizations shall ensure that recommendations of the Unit approved by their respective competent organs are implemented as expeditiously as possible. Such implementation may be subject to verification by the competent organs of the organizations, which may also request the Unit to issue follow-up reports. The Unit may also prepare such reports on its own initiative."

6/ Recently reconfirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 on the establishment of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

7/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, 20-31 August 1979 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.I.21 and corrigenda), chap. VII.